

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 PARIS 02552 270348Z  
ACTION CU-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 USIA-15 /044 W  
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R 261812Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4859  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERN  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS PARIS 02552

STATE FOR CU/ARTS

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SCUL  
SUBJECT: HOUSTON OPERA - "PORGY AND BESS" IN PARIS

1. THE HOUSTON OPERA PRODUCTION OF "PORGY AND BESS" OPENED AT PARIS PALAIS DES CONGRES TO A FULL HOUSE AND ENTHUSIASTIC MEDIA REVIEWS. RETURN OF GERSHWIN'S OPERA TO PARIS AFTER 25 YEARS AROUSED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION. THREE-PAGE ARTICLE WITH PHOTOS PUBLISHED IN "L'EXPRESS" PRIOR TO OPENING. RADIO, TELEVISION, AND WRITTEN PRESS HAVE GIVEN PRODUCTION HIGH MARKS.

2. COMPANY HAS WON ACCLAIM FROM ALL QUARTERS FOR EXCELLENCE OF PERFORMANCES, WITH ARTICLES COMPARING PRESENT PRODUCTION FAVORABLY WITH THAT OF THE 1950S WITH LEONTYNE PRICE AND WILLIAM WARFIELD WHICH FIRST INTRODUCED "PORGY AND BESS" TO EUROPEANS. SEVERAL CRITICS EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT AT WELL OF TALENT WHICH ALLOWED OPERA TO BRING THREE STARS TO ALTERNATE IN EACH OF MAJOR ROLES, WITH EACH ARTIST BRINGING UNIQUE PERSONALITY AND IMPRESSIVE VOCAL TALENT TO THE PART. "LE MONDE" TERMED THE PRODUCTION "A BREATH OF LIFE"

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WITH STARS OF "EXTRAORDINARY CLASS". "FRANCE SOIR" (LARGEST CIRCULATION DAILY) STATED "... IT IS MORE THAN AN OPERA, IT IS A DOCUMENT ON THE RESOURCES OF THE UNITED STATES." "L'AUREOLE" COMPARED THE OPERA TO "LA BOHEME" AND SPOKE OF "SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY TAKING PLACE AT THE PALAIS DES CONGRES... SOMETHING LIKE A COMMUNICATION OF SOULS, A FRATERNAL RECONCILIATION

CATCHING UP THE AUDIENCE IN ITS MOMENTUM AND HAPPINESS."

3. AMBASSADOR AND FRENCH SPONSOR CO-HOSTED OPENING  
NIGHT RECEPTION ATTENDED BY FRENCH GUESTS AND COMPANY.  
ATTENDANCE AT SUBSEQUENT PERFORMANCES EXCELLENT, AND  
ADVANCE SALES MOVING WELL. WHILE A SIX-WEEK RUN IN THE  
3,700-SEAT PALAIS PRESENTS A CHALLENGE, "PORGY AND BESS"  
PROMISES TO LIVE UP TO REPUTATION HERE AS ONE OF  
AMERICA'S FINEST CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT AND WILL SURELY  
BE OUTSTANDING AMERICAN CULTURAL EVENT OF SEASON.  
GAMMON

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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